

EXHIBIT NO. 10

DATE: 2/19/09

BILL NO. SB 383

Montana Senate Highways and Transportation Committee  
Re: SB 383 requiring full size license plates for quadricycles and off-highway vehicles.  
February 19, 2009.

Mr. Chairman and Committee Members,

The Pryors Coalition is a group of organizations and individuals concerned with the preservation of public land including the Pryor Mountains. The coalition includes Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society, Beartooth Back Country Horsemen, Our Montana, and the Eastern Wildlands Chapter of MWA, and many individuals not attached to any particular organization.

We are sorry that we are unable to make it to Helena for this hearing and so send this written testimony in support of SB 383.

It is well known that there is an increasing threat to public land by irresponsible use of OHVs. These irresponsible users also threaten the opportunities of the majority of responsible OHV users. The standard response to this problem by both OHV users and others is to request more and better law enforcement.

Unfortunately the various land management agencies have limited budgets and staff for enforcement. Public reporting can help with this deficit. Yet when we reported a recent serious OHV violation in the Pryor Mountains the first question from the USFS law enforcement officer was "Do you have a license plate number?" But the vehicles were legally unlicensed. Unlicensed vehicles are a serious handicap to law enforcement.

The Pryors Coalition believes that it is a minor cost and effort to install easily visible license plates on OHVs. (Many already have license plates.) Required license plates should be considered part of the responsibility that comes with the privilege of using public land. We have heard the claim that the licenses on the trucks and trailers hauling ATVs are sufficient for identification. But, as in the above mentioned incident in the Pryors, these trucks are often many miles and a long hike away. In this case they were never seen. Furthermore there are often several truck/trailer rigs at a trailhead and each carries several ATVs. That doesn't allow identification of the offending OHV.

We request that you pass SB 383 to provide for easier identification of those OHV users who do not respect public land, just like all of us have licenses on our cars on public roads.

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